

**College Access Project for Rural Alaska:  
Training Small Campuses in Universal Design**

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**Description of Presentation**

This session highlights the College Access Project for Rural Alaska (CAPRA). Funded through the Office of Postsecondary Education, the effort provided training and ongoing technical assistance for smaller campuses within the University of Alaska. Site based teams worked through challenges toward the goals of improving instructional design as well as educational outcomes for students with disabilities.

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**CAPRA Overview**

- ▶ Office of Postsecondary Education Grant
- ▶ \$755,000 over three years+ (2005-2009)
- ▶ Improve Educational Outcomes for Students with Documented Disabilities through Universal Design Approach and Increased Use of Assistive Technology
- ▶ Collaboration between Center for Human Development (grant focused) and Disability Support Services (sustainability focused)
- ▶ Train the Trainer - Targeted Adjunct Faculty of Smaller Community Campuses within University of Alaska Anchorage

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## Agenda

- › Context – Alaska Facts and UAA Campuses
- › Goals – What we wanted to achieve
- › Activity – What we were able to do
- › Challenges – What we had to overcome
- › Benefits – What we gained along the way
- › Sustainability – Where we go from here
- › Questions or comments?

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## Context – Alaska Fast Facts

- › Alaska covers 586,412 square miles of land. It is two and a half times the size of Texas, or one-fifth the size of the entire continental United States.
- › There are just over 670,000 Alaskan residents, a population density of about 1.1 persons per square mile, with over half the population residing in Anchorage or the nearby Matanuska-Susitna Borough.
- › The vast majority of the state, including the state capital, is unreachable by road.
- › The University of Alaska is a statewide system. UAA is in Anchorage, the campuses served were associated with UAA but in smaller communities

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## Context – UAA Campuses

- › The University of Alaska Anchorage is by far the largest campus within the UA system. It was not served by the grant – rather UAA provided training through to the smaller campuses.  
*(approximate headcount given)*
- › UAA (15,000)
- › Matanuska Susitna College (1,600)
- › Kenai Peninsula College (1,600)
- › Prince William Sound (1,200)

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### CAPRA Goals

- 1) Train-the-Trainer system for rural campuses to foster Universal Design approach
- 2) Implementation of training on those campuses to increase quality of education for students with disabilities
- 3) Multi-modal and sustainable statewide technical assistance
- 4) Evaluate effectiveness of training and technical assistance provided

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### Activity – Grant Implementation

- ▶ Training materials created in hard copy and electronic format
- ▶ Train the trainer sessions held for key personnel from each of the participating campuses
- ▶ Those key personnel then facilitated hands-on trainings within their own campuses
- ▶ Almost all adjunct faculty on small campuses were reached in addition to many full-time faculty and community members

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### Challenges

- ▶ Geographic Constraints
  - Travel (expensive and often impacted by weather)
  - Local Resources (limited contacts to work with)
- ▶ Professional Personnel
  - Multiple responsibilities and high turnover rates
- ▶ Community Campus Climates
  - Administrative Support and Leadership
  - Information Technology Infrastructure
  - Perceived importance of Professional Development

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## Benefits

- ▶ Increased Awareness
  - Accommodation Process
  - Universal Design
- ▶ Increased Usage
  - More Students Self-Disclosing
  - Faculty Connecting more with DSS
- ▶ Momentum for Ongoing Efforts
  - Assistive Technology Kits on all campuses
  - Web Accessibility has been introduced
  - Perceived importance has risen

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## Sustainability

- ▶ Moving from grant funded incentives to institutionalized practice
  - Ongoing EASI membership, Site wide AT/Software licensing, trainings across all UAA campuses
  - Tutorials and Quick Tips for Faculty - Developed in partnership with Faculty Senate Diversity Committee and the Faculty Technology Center
  - Partner in State of Alaska Web Accessibility Initiative
  - DSS has established pool of interns who can convert inaccessible content on behalf of those who find problems through self-evaluation

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## Questions/Comments



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### Contact Information

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